

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 2113

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB, US

SUBJ: THE KHMERS OF THIS SIDE ARE WAITING FOR US TO DO SOME-
THING ABOUT SETTLING THIS CONFLICT

1. SUMMARY: IN RECENT WEEKS I HAVE GROWN INCREASINGLY CONSCIOUS
OF A POLITICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON WHICH APPEARS TO ME
OF CENTRAL SIGNIFICANCE IN ASSESSING HOW LONG THIS SIDE CAN
HOLD OUT IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME MOTION ON THE PEACE FRONT.
SIMPLY STATED IT IS THAT THE KHMERS OF THE GKR REALIZE
THAT BY THEMSELVES THEY CANNOT BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE OTHER SIDE TO END THE CONFLICT. IT IS OBVIOUS
TO THEM THAT A DIALOGUE REQUIRES TWO WILLING INTERLOCUTORS
AND THE OTHER SIDE IS UNWILLING TO TALK TO THEM ON ANY
BASIS. THE KHMERS OF THIS SIDE ARE THEREFORE PLACING THEIR
HOPES IN OTHERS, PRIMARILY THE U.S. AND SECONDLY FRIENDLY
ASIAN STATES, WHO THEY BELIEVE ARE BETTER ABLE TO BRING
ABOUT A SETTLEMENT WITH THEIR ADVERSARIES.

2. THIS ATTITUDE HAS BEEN MANIFESTED IN ALL MY
RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LEADERS OF THE GKR, FROM
THE MARSHAL ON DOWN, AND INCLUDING THE MOST ASTUTE AND
PERCEPTIVE INDIVIDUALS THEY HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE LONG BORET
AND KEUKY LIM. IN A BUDDHIST SOCIETY SUCH AS THIS ONE
THE APPROVED COURSE OF BEHAVIOR IS TO SUFFER IN SILENCE
AND ENDURE PAIN, WHILE NOT, REPEAT NOT, VOICING TO A
FRIEND SUCH AS THE USG THE IMPOLITE THOUGHT THAT THEY
ARE DESPERATELY WATCHING US FOR SOME SIGN THAT WE ARE
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ACTIVELY WORKING ON A WAY TO END THEIR PAIN AND SUF-

FERING BY STOPPING THE WAR. THE GKR'S LEADERS ARE THEMSELVES GRASPING AT ANY STRAW THAT FLOATS BY THAT MIGHT BE A SIGNAL FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF A WILLINGNESS TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS, AS EXEMPLIFIED RECENTLY BY LONG BORET'S SPENDING EIGHT HOURS PROBING THE BONA FIDES OF "DR. HSIEH" (SEE PHNOM PENH 1881).

3. THE GKR HAS DONE ALL IT CAN ON ITS OWN TO GET PEACE TALKS STARTED. THE MARSHAL'S GOVERNMENT HAS MADE REPEATED DECLARATIONS OF ITS WILLINGNESS, EVEN EAGERNESS, TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHER SIDE. THESE OVERTURES HAVE BEEN REJECTED OUT OF HAND. I BELIEVE THE GKR LEADERSHIP HAS ACCEPTED THE IDEA THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO MAKE MAJOR CONCESSIONS, INCLUDING PROBABLY THEIR OWN DEPARTURE FROM THE CAMBODIAN SCENE, IN ORDER TO BRING THE BLOODSHED THE COUNTRY IS SUFFERING TO A HALT. THEY WARMLY ACCEPTED THE OUTCOME OF THE CREDENTIALS FIGHT AT THE UN, THE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR TALKS BETWEEN THE KHMER PARTIES AND URGING THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNSYG AND OF THE POWERS SUPPORTING THE TWO SIDES IN THE CONFLICT. TWO MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THAT RESOLUTION, AND THEY HAVE OBSERVED NO MOVEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS, NOR BY THE PRINCIPAL BACKERS OF THE INDIGENOUS PARTIES. IF THERE HAS BEEN ANY MOTION IN THE DIRECTIONS CALLED FOR BY THE UNGA RESOLUTION, THE KHMERS IN PHNOM PENH KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT.

4. MEANWHILE THE BLOODLETTING CONTINUES, BOTH KHMER SIDES SUFFER MOUNTING CASUALTIES AND DESPERATELY SEARCH FOR MORE MANPOWER TO THROW INTO THE BREACHES THAT DEVELOP. THE GKR KNOWS IT FACES ANOTHER DEADLINE, ANOTHER CHALLENGE TO ITS LEGITIMACY THAT MAY ARISE AT ANY TIME AND REGARDLESS OF HOW WELL THEIR SOLDIERS PERFORM ON THE BATTLEFIELD. THEY ARE HEARING FROM SOME OF THEIR ASIAN FRIENDS THAT THE NEXT TIME SUCH A VOTE ARISES THEY WILL NOT ENJOY THE SUPPORT THEY HAVE COUNTED ON IN THE PAST. YET WHEN THESE ASIAN FRIENDS TRY TO FOLLOW UP ON THE UNGA RESOLUTION BY SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO GET PEACE NEGOTIATIONS STARTED OUR TENDENCY IS IN EFFECT TO COUSEL THEM NOT TO UNDERTAKE ANY INITIATIVES THAT MIGHT WORK

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AT CROSS-PURPOSES. JUST YESTERDAY THEDEPARTING MALAYSIAN CHARGE REMINDED ME OF THE STRONG INTEREST HIS MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS (GHAZALI) HAS SHOWN IN HELPING FIND A SOLUTION TO THE CAMBODIAN CONFLICT. THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHERS WILLING TO HELP, BUT THEY TOO LOOK TO US FOR LEADERSHIP OR AT LEAST ENCOURAGEMENT.

5. I HAVE BEEN CLOSELY QUESTIONED BY OFFICIALS SUCH

AS KEUKY LIM, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FORMULATIONS FOUND IN THE MARTINIQUE COMMUNIQUE("THE HOPE THAT THE CONTENDING PARTIES WOULD ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS") AND GISCARD'S DECEMBER 20 TV INTERVIEW WITH SAKINGER (THE GOF'S IDEA OF "A TYPE OF POLITICAL SOLUTION....WHICH IS NOT PRECISELY NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES"). I HAVE BEEN ASKED WHETHER THIS MEANS THAT THE FRENCH, OR WE OURSELVES, ARE WORKING ON A SOLUTION, SINCE THE POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE KHMER PARTIES APPEARS TO BE OUT OF THE QUESTION.

6. I MUST STATE VERY FRANKLY THAT THE KHMERS OF THIS SIDE ARE WAITING, AND WAITING DESPERATELY, FOR US TO GET INVOLVED. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN PHNOM PENH, ARE TALKING THESE DAYS ABOUT OBTAINING ADDITIONAL FUNDS FROM THE CONGRESS TO FINANCE THE NEXT FEW MONTHS OF THE WAR. THE KHMERS OF THIS SIDE UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE OUR EFFORTS IN THIS DOMAIN, BUT WHAT THEY ARE WONDERING ABOUT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING TO MAKE THE FURTHER FINANCING OF THE WAR UNNECESSARY, THAT WAR WHICH NEXT MONTH WILL ENTER ITS SIXTH YEAR APPARENTLY NO CLOSER TO A RESOLUTION THAN THE DAY IT BEGAN. THE KHMERS OF THIS SIDE HAVE COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT THEY CANNOT FIND A SOLUTION THEMSELVES BECAUSE THEY ARE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER SIDE AS ONE PARTY TO A PEACE DIALOGUE. IF THEY CANNOT GET A DIALOGUE STARTED THEMSELVES, THEN SOMEBODY ELSE MUST DO IT FOR THEM OR FIND A SOLUTION IN SOME OTHER MANNER. THEY NATURALLY LOOK TO US AS THE GREAT POWER WHICH HAS THE MEANS TO UNDERTAKE THIS JOB. WHAT THEY MUST BE WONDERING IS WHAT IS HOLDING US BACK? THEY CERTAINLY ARE NOT HOLDING US BACK, AND IF THEY ARE NOT, WHO OR WHAT IS? I MUST SAY I DO NOT HAVE THE ANSWERS
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TO THESE QUESTIONS.
DEAN

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